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Chairman: Mr. Mammadov (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Azerbaijan)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Saha

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In the absence of Mr. Yousfi (Algeria), Mr. Mammadov (Azerbaijan), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 144: Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in the Middle East (*continued*)

(b) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (*continued*) (A/61/766 and A/61/803)

1. **Mr. Sach** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 (A/61/766), said that, by its resolution 60/278, the General Assembly had appropriated an amount of $97,579,600 to the Special Account for UNIFIL for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007. The Security Council, by its resolution 1701 (2006), had authorized an increase in the Force strength to a maximum of 15,000 troops. By the same resolution, the Council had extended the mandate of UNIFIL until 31 August 2007 and had decided that, in addition to carrying out its mandate under resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978), the Force would monitor the cessation of hostilities, support the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces and support the Government of Lebanon in securing its borders and entry points.

2. By its resolution 61/250, the General Assembly had authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not exceeding $257,340,400 for the expansion of UNIFIL. That amount included some $50 million previously authorized by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), in addition to the $97,579,600 already appropriated for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007. The General Assembly had also authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not exceeding $2,486,900 for the support account for peacekeeping operations and for the backstopping of the Force at Headquarters.

3. The proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 amounted to $522.8 million, incorporating resource requirements of $259.8 million previously authorized by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/250 and the amount of $93.5 million already appropriated, under resolution 60/278, for the maintenance and expansion of UNIFIL for the period through 30 June 2007. It provided for the deployment of 14,790 military contingent personnel, 406 international staff and 696 national staff.

4. The action sought of the General Assembly, set out in paragraph 87 of the Secretary-General's report (A/61/766), with the appropriation of an additional amount of $427,660,500 for UNIFIL. That amount comprised the amount for the maintenance of the Force and the support account for peacekeeping operations and included the amounts previously authorized by the General Assembly for the current financial period. The General Assembly was also requested to approve a related assessment of $170,320,100 for the period from 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007, representing the additional share for the support account for peacekeeping operations and taking into account amounts already assessed.

5. **Mr. Saha** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/61/803), said that the Advisory Committee recognized that the expanded mandate of UNIFIL and its increased operations required an increase in the mission's substantive and support components. Given the timing of the submission and consideration of the revised budget, however, it was unlikely that the proposed staffing for the Force for 2006/07 could be put in place and associated operational costs fully utilized within the budget period ending on 30 June 2007. The Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of 5 per cent in the proposed budget; accordingly, the estimated budget requirements for UNIFIL should be reduced from $522.8 million to $496.6 million. If the appropriation proved insufficient, further requirements would be reported in the context of the performance report.

6. The Advisory Committee had no objections to the proposed staffing structure of UNIFIL, subject to the observations and recommendations set out in its report. It would revert to the matter in the context of its review of the budget for UNIFIL for the period 2007/08 and in light of any further information and clarifications that might be provided.

7. A number of specific observations and recommendations had been made on the proposed staffing requirements, including for the Regional Oversight Office in UNIFIL and the Conduct and Discipline Team. The Advisory Committee had also requested that a review should be undertaken to see

which functions currently proposed for Field Service staff, as well as international Professional staff, could be appropriately carried out by national staff.

8. **Mr. Thomma** (Germany), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, Moldova and Ukraine, said that the European Union fully supported UNIFIL and all other peacekeeping operations as a core function of the United Nations, and expressed its appreciation to Member States that had contributed to the Force. His delegation welcomed the continued support provided to the mission by the Strategic Military Cell at United Nations Headquarters and the agreement regarding the Maritime Task Force between the United Nations and countries contributing crucial maritime resources.

9. He looked forward to receiving more detailed information on and clarification of the differences between the Secretary-General's budget proposal and the Advisory Committee's recommendations. While all necessary financial means should be granted to the Secretary-General to implement Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), the Secretariat was also expected to present budget proposals that reflected the most efficient means of fulfilling peacekeeping mandates.

10. **Mr. Mukai** (Japan) said that as the General Assembly continued to address the surge in peacekeeping operations, it was necessary to ensure their effective implementation while also enhancing budgetary discipline, accountability and transparency. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 61/256 on strengthening of the capacity of the Organization on peacekeeping operations, and looked forward to receiving a comprehensive report on functions, budgetary discipline and financial implications.

11. With regard to the proposed budget of UNIFIL, his delegation shared the concern expressed by the Advisory Committee about the tendency to assert resource requirements and not fully explain or justify them. UNIFIL's mandate must be implemented without duplication or overlap, through careful planning. His delegation concurred with the approach taken by the Advisory Committee, since as at 5 March 2007, less than 30 per cent ($61.1 million) of the total provision of $215.9 for operational costs had been utilized, and that provision was unlikely to be fully utilized within the budget period ending on 30 June 2007. Accordingly, the level of assessment should be adjusted. Depending on the clarifications and justifications provided by the Secretariat, it might be necessary to consider making deeper cuts than those recommended by ACABQ. It was also possible that the decision on an appropriation could be deferred and further commitment authority provided to continue operations.

12. His delegation saw little justification for stationing 4 civilians and 29 military officers in New York to administer the Strategic Military Cell, and called for clarification of its relations with the Military Adviser. In that connection, there was a discrepancy between the budget proposal for UNIFIL (A/61/766) and the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the implementation of its resolution 1701 (2006) for the period from 11 to 17 August 2006 (S/2006/670). He therefore requested an explanation of the rationale for appropriating some $2.5 million for the support account for peacekeeping operations.

13. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that with regard to the Regional Oversight Office, factors such as risk and the complexity of operations and, with regard to the Conduct and Discipline Team, actual workload should be considered in deploying resources, and called for immediate review of those issues. He also expressed doubts about the proposals for quick-impact projects in UNIFIL, noting that resources must be utilized in accordance with policy agreed by the General Assembly.

14. **Mr. Ramadan** (Lebanon) said that his Government was grateful for and supportive of the work being done by UNIFIL to bring stability to the southern part of the country in particular. His delegation had always supported requests by the Secretary-General for the resources required for the efficient and effective performance of the Force. The real issue was not the level of assessment or a reduction of the budget, but ensuring that the Force had sufficient resources to perform its vital task as mandated by the Security Council.

15. **Mr. Sach** (Controller) said that the request for appropriating $2.5 million for the support account for peacekeeping operations in the context of the UNIFIL

budget followed an existing commitment authority for that amount granted the previous fall in connection with commitments in place at that time for Headquarters-based support costs.

Agenda item 151: Financing of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (*continued*)
(A/61/759 and A/61/802)

16. **Mr. Sach** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) for the period from 25 August 2006 to 30 June 2007 (A/61/759), said that UNMIT had been established by Security Council resolution 1704 (2006). The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/249, had authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not exceeding $170,221,100 for the establishment and maintenance of UNMIT. By its resolution 1745 (2007) the Security Council had extended the mandate of the Mission until 26 February 2008.

17. The proposed budget for the period from 25 August 2006 to 30 June 2007 amounted to $194.6 million, incorporating and superseding the initial resource requirements. Owing to the timing in the preparation and issuance of the proposed budget, it did not include resource requirements related to the deployment of an additional formed police unit that was expected to occur prior to the holding of elections scheduled for April 2007. The Secretariat would attempt to absorb those requirements within the proposed budget level.

18. As set out in paragraph 150 of the Secretary-General's report (A/61/759), the General Assembly was requested to appropriate an amount of $194,565,300 for the establishment and maintenance of UNMIT for the period from 25 August 2006 to 30 June 2007, inclusive of the previously authorized commitment authority. The General Assembly was also requested to approve an associated assessment of the amount of $51,424,880, which took into account an amount of $143,140,420 already assessed for the period from 25 August 2006 to 25 February 2007.

19. **Mr. Saha** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/61/802), said that, based on the expenditure pattern of the first six months, the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction of 5 per cent in the proposed budget for the period from 25 August 2006 to 30 June 2007.

20. The Advisory Committee had also made a number of recommendations concerning staffing and had urged a careful review by the Mission and at Headquarters of the staffing requirements, taking into account the Mission's special circumstances. For example, given the strong presence of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Timor-Leste, care should be taken to avoid duplicating functions and structures that already existed within the country team. Furthermore, the possibility that both presidential and parliamentary elections might be concluded by the end of the financial period should be taken into account in planning for future staffing and structures.

21. **Mr. Stone** (Australia), speaking on behalf of the CANZ group of countries (Australia, Canada and New Zealand), said that the CANZ delegations welcomed the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste pursuant to Security Council resolution 1745 (2007). They were also pleased with the presentation of the first results-based budget, which represented an important development in the Organization's work in Timor-Leste.

22. Although UNMIT was relatively new, the fact that some 60 per cent of international posts remained unfilled was a concern. The CANZ countries would appreciate receiving an update from the Secretariat as to whether the situation had improved and how it planned to expeditiously fill those posts.

23. The CANZ countries had taken note of the Advisory Committee's recommendations, particularly with regard to the determination of the Mission's structure and staffing levels. Staffing requirements of missions should be carefully reviewed for each budget cycle.

24. Regarding the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the post of Deputy Police Commissioner for Administration and Development should be established at the P-5 level rather than the D-1 level, it should be noted that the reform, restructuring and rebuilding of the Timorese national police was a complex and critical task which required a highly qualified person and continuity in the role. The grade level of the Deputy Police Commissioner should reflect those requirements.

25. Concerning the Advisory Committee's recommendation for a reduction in the proposed budget for the period from 25 August 2006 to 30 June 2007 by 5 per cent, the CANZ countries would welcome the Secretariat's practical assessment of the potential operational impact of such a reduction, in view of the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections.

26. Finally, it was disturbing that, as at the end of February 2007, only 6 per cent of assessed contributions for UNMIT had been received. The high level of outstanding assessments not only placed the Mission in a precarious cash position but also delayed payment to the Member States providing police personnel.

27. **Mr. Mukai** (Japan) said that his delegation strongly supported the extension of the mandate of UNMIT pursuant to Security Council resolution 1745 (2007), particularly in view of the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections.

28. He fully concurred with the Advisory Committee's recommendations regarding the budget of UNMIT and said that he would like to see further adjustments to the level of assessment. He also agreed with the Advisory Committee's recommendations concerning the administration and management of the Mission and opportunities for further savings.

29. His delegation supported the Advisory Committee's view that, based on its expenditure pattern as at 5 March 2007, the Mission was unlikely to utilize all the requested resources. The apportionment of resources should be decided in view of clarifications and justifications by the Secretariat.

30. His delegation agreed with the Advisory Committee that a standard template should not be used routinely in determining the structure and staffing levels of missions, including the number and grade levels of posts. With respect to specific recommendations on posts, he had doubts concerning the requirement for two Assistant Secretary-General level posts. He also questioned the need for a D-2 Chief of Staff, a D-1 Chief Political Affairs Officer and two D-1 Deputy Police Commissioners. His delegation had further reservations regarding the proposed staffing of the Conduct and Discipline Team and the Internal Oversight Office.

31. The delegation of Japan fully agreed with the Advisory Committee that care should be taken to avoid duplicating functions and structures that already existed within the country team. In that regard, it would be useful to receive further details regarding the expected areas of cooperation between the Mission, country team partners, bilateral partners and multilateral partners.

32. Finally, given the presence of bilateral donors and United Nations funds and programmes in the field, there was no clear justification for quick-impact projects. His delegation was disturbed at the lack of comprehensive policy and legal basis in respect of quick-impact projects.

33. **Mr. Traystman** (United States of America) said that the surge in peacekeeping operations demanded stronger management, more efficient implementation of mandates and greater accountability for action. In the light of current and future challenges, it was particularly important that the Secretariat should ensure that requests for resources were fully justified.

34. His delegation was concerned at the lack of budget discipline in respect of peacekeeping missions. In its report on the proposed budget of UNMIT (A/61/802), the Advisory Committee had pointed out that, as at 5 March 2007, expenditures amounted to 40 per cent for a financial period that was more than 80 per cent complete. Projected expenditures for the period from 6 March to 30 June 2007 corresponded precisely to the envisaged unencumbered balance. In its report on the financing of UNIFIL (A/61/803), the Advisory Committee had referred to a similar pattern of under-expenditure. While it was recognized that initial budgets had been overestimated owing to uncertainty, subsequent budgets should reflect field experience. His delegation would endeavour to clarify the actual requirements of both missions through 30 June 2007 in informal consultations. It was prepared to support the Advisory Committee's recommendation of a 5 per cent reduction in the proposed budgets for UNMIT and UNIFIL but would call for further reductions, if justified.

35. With respect to UNMIT in particular, his delegation noted that the proposed budget contained detailed information on the activities and funding provisions of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. Such detailed information should be included in the proposed budgets of all peacekeeping missions, as it was important to avoid any overlap or duplication of activities between the missions and

United Nations country teams. His delegation would seek further clarification in informal consultations on the steps being taken by the United Nations country team in Timor-Leste to coordinate activities and share common premises and services.

36. **Mr. Silalahi** (Indonesia) said that UNMIT would make a significant contribution to the establishment of peace and security in Timor-Leste, beginning with its support of the forthcoming presidential and parliamentary elections. Regarding the proposed budget for the period from 25 August 2006 to 30 June 2007, it was important that the very limited amount of resources should be allocated to the appropriate units and teams. For example, it had been proposed that a large number of P-4/P-5 officers should be appointed to the Electoral Assistance Office, whereas the proposed staffing of the Democratic Governance Support Office included only a handful of officers at the P-4/P-5 level. Although the upcoming elections were important, it should be remembered that the ultimate goal was democratic governance. Similarly, it had been proposed that a large number of staff should be appointed to the Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for governance support, development and humanitarian coordination. It would be more appropriate to allocate those resources to the Administration of Justice Support Section or the Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for security sector support and rule of law, since their functions had a more direct impact on the population.

37. Finally, his delegation did not understand the rationale for appointing a large number of staff to the Serious Crimes Investigation Team, which dealt with events of the past. It seemed more worthwhile to invest in the country's future by increasing the staff at the Humanitarian Affairs Unit, the Gender Affairs Unit or the HIV/AIDS Unit. His delegation urged the Secretariat to further examine the matter and realign its priorities, taking into account the limited available budget.

38. **Mr. Sach** (Controller) pointed out that the numbers in the reports resulted from computations that had been made towards the end of 2006; in the light of subsequent events, it was clear that deployment projections had been somewhat optimistic. The Secretariat had taken note of the views of the Advisory Committee and different Member States regarding actual requirements for the financial period from 25 August 2006 through 30 June 2007 and the need to make adjustments accordingly. The matter would be pursued in informal consultations.

Agenda item 124: Joint Inspection Unit (*continued*) (A/C.5/61/L.34)

Draft resolution A/C.5/61/L.34: Programme of work of the Joint Inspection Unit for 2007

39. *Draft resolution A/C.5/61/L.34 was adopted.*

Agenda item 133: Financing of the United Nations Operation in Burundi (*continued*) (A/C.5/61/L.35)

Draft decision A/C.5/61/L.35: Financing of the United Nations Operation in Burundi

40. *Draft decision A/C.5/61/L.35 was adopted.*

41. **Mr. Shingiro** (Burundi) said that his Government greatly appreciated the donation of the assets of the Operation. It hoped that the General Assembly would also donate the assets of the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi when the mandate of that Office ended.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.